(b) if so, the concept and objects thereof and the details of the groups expected to be involved?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b). With a view to mobilise substantial resources for major expansion in ports sector and also to improve efficiency and productivity, and to induct latest technology, Government has issued guidelines for private sector participation for all Major Ports including Calcutta. Private sector participation will be on the basis of open competitive bidding and tenders will be invited on build, own and transfer (BOT) basis. There will be complete transparency in procedure and evaluation criteria.

The groups expected to be involved inter-alia may include oil, steel and petro-chemical sectors, Container and other operators, dredging companies and various foreign Port Authorities. Entrepreneurs are free to participate in private sector participation tenders as and when they are announced by the Port.

Arms Import by Pakistan

1374. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan's arms imports are more than those of India;

(b) if so, whether the Government have since examined the implications thereof and taken appropriate action in the interest of India's own defence preparedness; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c). Government is aware of the fact that Pakistan is acquiring substantial quantities of arms and that in the recent past there has been an upswing in her arms import in view of the Brown amendment, etc. India follows a policy of self reliance and indigenous efforts have contributed a lot in our defence preparedness.

All developments having bearing on India's national security are monitored, threat perceptions are reviewed continuously, and necessary steps are taken, from time to time, to maintain appropriate defence preparedness.

Indo-Oman Ties

1375. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether steps are being taken to establish close ties with Oman;

(b) whether the matter was discussed at high level official talks between the two countries recently;

(c) if so, the response of the Government of Oman thereto; and

(d) the details of the Joint venture projects proposed to be set up in Oman with Indian collaboration during the next two years for which agreements have been signed?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Government of Oman responded positively and reaffirmed its commitment for further strengthening Indo-Oman relations.

(d) The two countries have agreed to set up a Joint venture fertiliser factory at Sur in Oman at an estimated cost of US $ 1106 million with a capacity to produce 4,400 MTs of urea and 3500 MTs of ammonia per day. The Indian partners are Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO) and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd. (RCF) who will hold 25 per cent equity each. The remaining 50 per cent of the equity will be held by the Government of Oman. The entire production of urea will be bought by KRIBHCO/RCF.

[Translation]

Governing body of KVS

1376. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state the decisions taken in the meeting of the Governing body of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan held recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA) : The Board of Governors of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan in its meeting held on 8th November, 1996 approved among other things amendment to rules 19 (9) and 16, re-employment of teachers of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan retiring on superannuation on or after 30th November of the year upto 31st March Next year, decentralisation of disbursement of CPF/GPF advances and Part-final withdrawals at regional level, cadre review of Group 'D' employees and amendment of recruitment rules for Education Officers.

Central University in Maharashtra

1377. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any Central University in Maharashtra;

(b) if not, whether any demand has been made in this regard; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon?